

[Continued from the first page.]

denation of these claims, the Treasury was empty; yet in 1818, though an unfavorable report was made, that report was not acquiesced in. They memorialized Congress again in 1822 and 1824. It was not until 1827 that the claimants fully understood the strength of their claims. The instructions and journals of the commissioners who had negotiated the treaty with France in 1800 were first published in 1827, and the public mind then for the first time saw that these claimants had been abandoned against France, in consequence and as a set off against claims which France had against this country, and which she then abandoned. It is not to Congress alone that these claimants have appealed, but they have also filed their claims with the proper department of the Government, the State Department; and there they may be found, 619 cases docketed and pigeon-holed and covered with ciphers, a melancholy proof of the tardy administration of justice.

The claimants were not few; there were 1,011 individuals interested in this bill, more than 900 of whom claim in their own right, and more than 400 are yet alive of the original claimants. He did not say that there was a single speculator in the number. He did not think the objections of the honorable Senator from South Carolina, with respect to the construction of the commission, well founded, and he thought the course prescribed to them was such as had always been adopted by similar commissions.

Mr. McDUFFIE said the claims lodged in the State Department were filed against the French Government, and not against their own Government. There was no evidence of these claims in Congress before 1837. He did not say anything against the claims on the ground of the lapse of time, but from the want of evidence in their favor before Congress, and the presumption of evidence against them afforded by the adverse reports of Congress.

Mr. ARCHER assured the Senator from South Carolina that he could furnish him with more evidence in favor of these claims, which had come before him in the shape of petitions and memorials, than he would choose (he imagined) to examine. It had been asked, when the claims were first introduced from Massachusetts (Mr. BATES) had told him that one was a poor-house in that State, driven there very probably by the non-settlement of this claim. It was asked, where was the evidence? Why, the petitioners ask to be allowed to produce their evidence, and to have a fair judicial decision. Again, where are the safeguards which protect the claims? The amount of claims is about \$12,000,000; the amount of compensation is \$5,000,000. Here was the strongest of all safeguards. All the claimants, from a principle of self-interest, will be guards against each other. What is the evidence to be added? It is the evidence of our own State archives; the history of our own country; the highest of all evidence—the treaties of our own Government.

Mr. BENTON wished to speak upon the question before the Senate, but he did not wish further to delay the consideration of the order of the day; and he moved to defer the further consideration of this bill until to-morrow.

ABUSE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IN THE NEW YORK CUSTOM-HOUSE.

Mr. DAYTON submitted the following resolutions: Resolved, That the Committee on the Library be instructed to inquire forthwith whether a case of books has been forwarded within the past year by the French Chamber of Deputies, or any other Department of the French Government, for the use and benefit of the Government of the United States; and if so, what the committee have recommended in relation thereto, and deposit the same in the Congressional Library.

Resolved, further, That, upon the receipt of said books, the Librarian of Congress be directed to acknowledge the same in proper form, and to indicate to the Librarian of the French Chamber of Deputies the receipt of the books by this Government of the country which prompted their presentation.

Mr. DAYTON said that he offered these resolutions under a sense of shame and humiliation. He had just read an announcement in a New York newspaper that the Librarian of the French Chamber of Deputies to this Government, had been publicly sold at a custom-house sale in that city for storage! These books consist, as stated, of "Recueil des Historiens des Gaules de la France," a large and splendid work, in twenty volumes, comprising a period of one hundred and two years, from the royal press of France, with illuminated title, page engravings, &c.; also the *Procès Verbaux des Séances de la Chambre des Deputés*, in twenty-three volumes, superbly bound, session 1843—budget 1844, together with a few other books, all from the royal press, and not to be obtained but from the French Government itself.

Mr. D. said the sale of these books under the circumstances was a most awkward and unpleasant mistake. It was due to the French Government, and more especially was it due to ourselves, that the mistake be rectified in all those quarters. We were not, he trusted, so reckless of all those courtesies and civilities which ought to characterize the intercourse of civilized nations as to disregard or overlook this act of courtesy from a foreign Government. Were it not that this sale had become a matter of notoriety, we might content ourselves in reclaiming the books at the expense of the Government, if any expense were necessary to put it. As it is, a resolution of the kind seemed necessary to connect the matter in a proper position before the public.

Mr. TAPPAN made some observations which were not heard distinctly, the purpose of which appeared to be, that he did not know of any authority by which, if the case of books in question had been addressed to any functionary of the Government, the collector at New York could have directed the sale of them.

Mr. McDUFFIE said this was a most extraordinary affair. He wished to know to whom the books had been addressed, and also by what authority the books had been sold; he was desirous to know something more of the matter.

Mr. DAYTON said that the statement which he had made was equally true as it was extraordinary; and, for the information of the Senator from South Carolina as well as others, he wished the communication which he had received in relation to this affair to be read by the Secretary.

Mr. McDUFFIE thought that the mistake had arisen from the case not having been addressed to any public functionary. The resolutions were accordingly modified and then adopted.

NATURALIZATION LAWS.

Mr. ARCHER presented a memorial from 5,000 citizens of St. Louis, praying for a reform in the naturalization laws.

Mr. A. said, on presenting this memorial, that the people of the United States had spoken in relation to this subject in no imposing a manner that little appeared to be left to Congress but to respond to their voice and accord to their wishes. He hoped that Senators would be the great influence on the subject, and that when it came before them for discussion and action, he should have the assistance and support of the honorable Senators from New York in forwarding the great object of a salutary reform in the laws referred to.

Mr. ALLEN inquired respecting any information which the Committee on the Judiciary had received from the commission appointed to take testimony on the subject at New York, Philadelphia, and other cities. He did not know the authority by which this commission had been appointed, nor the rules for taking evidence which had been adopted. He wished to know the state of the business and the nature of the information received by the gentlemen on the part of the committee of the Senate who possessed this information.

Mr. BERRIEN observed that a resolution had been passed directing the Committee on the Judiciary to send for persons and papers, and that under another resolution the appointment of a commission was authorized to collect information upon the points bearing on the question of reform. Commissioners had been appointed in the cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and New Orleans; that at Baltimore were closed during the present week; the commission at Philadelphia had closed, but the report was not yet received; from New Orleans the commission had not yet heard. He had a great conviction of the importance of the subject, and should ask the attention of the Senate to it so soon as the returns were received.

The CHAIR said before the Senate the following communication from the President of the United States, which was read, and ordered to be printed.

TERRITORY OF OREGON.

In answer to the resolution of the Senate of the 11th December, 1844, requesting the President to lay before the Senate, if in his judgment that may be done without prejudice to the public interests, a copy of any instructions which may have been given by the Executive to the American Minister in England on the subject of the title to and occupation of the Territory of Oregon since the 4th day of March, 1841; also, a copy of any correspondence which may have passed between this Government and that of Great Britain, or between either of the two Governments and the Minister to say that, in my opinion, that subject since that time, I have to say that, in my opinion, as the negotiation is still pending, the information sought for cannot be communicated without prejudice to the public service.

I deem it proper, however, to add, that considerable progress has been made in the discussion, which has been carried on in a very amicable spirit between the two Governments, and that there is reason to hope that it may be terminated, and the negotiation be brought to a close, within a short period.

I have delayed answering the resolutions under the expectation, expressed in my annual message, that the negotiation would be brought to a close, before the close of the present session of Congress, and that the information called for by the resolution of the Senate might be communicated.

JOHN TYLER.

BILLS PASSED.

A bill for the relief of the legal representatives of George Duval.

A bill providing for arrangements of pay due the 4th regiment of the 2d brigade of Vermont militia.

An act to amend an act making appropriations for the naval service for the year 1845.

An act for the relocation of certain grants of land to General Lafayette.

The bill explanatory of an act making appropriations for the civil and diplomatic expenses of the Government.

The French Spoliation bill was passed over informally for this day.

The bill to reduce the pay of the army, was received, twice read, and referred.

ANNEXATION OF TEXAS.

The Senate has under consideration on every day of the week the joint resolutions from the House of Representatives for the annexation of Texas to the United States. On this subject the following Senators have made speeches:

Mr. WOODBURY addressed the Senate in a series of observations strongly in favor of the joint resolutions received from the House. He contended for the constitutionality of these resolutions, the necessity for coming to a conclusion upon the subject, and its great value and importance. Mr. W. spoke nearly three hours.

Mr. CHASE addressed the Senate at great length in opposition to the joint resolutions received from the House of Representatives, opposing them on the ground of their unconstitutionality. His speech was a brilliant and effective one, and occupied nearly three hours in its delivery.

Mr. HENDERSON supported the constitutionality of the resolutions. He examined the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and denied the correctness of the conclusions therein. He argued that there was nothing in the existing relations between this country and Mexico, and nothing in the relations between Mexico and Texas, which rendered the adoption of the joint resolutions either a breach of the national faith, or a violation of any obligations, either political or moral, due from the United States to any foreign nation whatever.

Mr. H. recapitulated the different arguments which had been used against the adoption of the resolutions, and concluded with expressing his conviction that Congress was fully competent to adopt them, and that it was expedient and proper to do so.

Mr. BARROW denied that the election of Mr. Polk was an evidence that the people of the country had expressed their desire for the annexation of Texas, and had settled the question in the affirmative. He argued strongly against the constitutionality of the joint resolutions. Besides the constitutional objection, he entertained strong objections to the expediency of annexation; those points Mr. B. stated at considerable length, and with much force.

Mr. B. said that all the reasons which he had heard in favor of the annexation of Texas might be reduced to five. These were, to extend the area of freedom, to strengthen the defenses of New Orleans, to prevent England from gaining an ascendancy in Texas, to open a market for Northern manufactures and Western products, and to strengthen the Southern States.

He examined these different motives for annexation, and denounced them all as false in their principles, and calculated to be injurious in their operation.

Mr. COLQUITT addressed the Senate for more than two hours in defense of the joint resolutions, in which he defended the constitutionality of the resolutions, and warmly advocated the annexation of Texas.

Mr. SIMMONS replied to Mr. COLQUITT. He deprecated the mixing up any false issues or extraneous questions with the avowed object of the resolutions before the Senate. He said that the assertion that Texas was knocking at our door for admission was not, in his opinion, well founded; and yet that was urged as one of the foundations for the measure now under consideration.

He controverted the idea thrown out by the Senator from Mississippi, (Mr. WALKER), that Rhode Island and North Carolina were admitted as foreign States. Rhode Island was probably the oldest State in the world having a written Constitution, embodying all the great principles of civil and religious liberty, and which had been in existence since the people of Rhode Island had a right to be considered as part of the original United States as any State in the Union. Rhode Island was not to be called a new or a foreign State, nor her admission into the Union cited as a precedent for the admission of Texas. Rhode Island never was admitted as a new State, but as a part of the original United States. He examined the history of the annexation of Texas, and showed that the people of Rhode Island had a right to be considered as part of the original United States as any State in the Union. Rhode Island was not to be called a new or a foreign State, nor her admission into the Union cited as a precedent for the admission of Texas. Rhode Island never was admitted as a new State, but as a part of the original United States. He examined the history of the annexation of Texas, and showed that the people of Rhode Island had a right to be considered as part of the original United States as any State in the Union.

Mr. S. called the constitutional ground assumed by the Senator from Georgia, (Mr. COLQUITT), and made an elaborate and powerful reply to the arguments of that gentleman, in opposition to the annexation of Texas upon the principles of the joint resolution passed by the House of Representatives. In 1837 Texas applied for admission into the Union. There was, in his opinion, much in the mode of admission then proposed, which was preferable to the one now before the Senate. He denied that the annexation of Texas was a violation of the Constitution, and he denied that the annexation of Texas was a violation of the Constitution, and he denied that the annexation of Texas was a violation of the Constitution.

The resolution cannot be adopted without a violation of the Constitution. Mr. Jefferson's opinions had been quoted with respect to the admission of new States, and his competency as an authority had been denied. Mr. S. advocated Mr. Jefferson's views, and he said that the annexation of Texas was a violation of the Constitution, and he denied that the annexation of Texas was a violation of the Constitution, and he denied that the annexation of Texas was a violation of the Constitution.

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